

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LAGOS 07366 011716Z

43

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 /073 W

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P R 011604Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 492

INFO DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY CONTONOU

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMCONSUL DOUALA

AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

S E C R E T LAGOS 7366

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, NI

SUBJ: THE NEW FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT:

AN ASSESSMENT

REF : LAGOS 7303 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY: THE CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP OF THE FMG APPEARS
COMPLETE AND ACCEPTED BY NIGERIAN PUBLIC AND ARMED FORCES.
AIRPORTS TO REOPEN INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC AND BORDER RESTRICTIONS
TO BE LIFTED AUGUST 2. NEW REGIME IS IN EFFECTIVE CONTROL
COUNTRY. BIG LOSERS IN CHANGE APPEAR TO BE CIVILIANS WHO HAVE
NOT RPT NOT YET BEEN NAMED SINGLE POST ALTHOUGH COMMISSIONER-

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 LAGOS 07366 011716Z

SHIPS HAVE NOT RPT NOT YET BEEN FILLED. THIS COULD LEAD TO

DEEPENING CLEAVAGE BETWEEN CIVILIAN AND MILITARY IN COUNTRY.
SO FAR, CHANGE CONSISTS OF NEW FACES ONLY, NO BASIC POLICY CHANGE.
LONG TERM STABILITY LESS CERTAIN BUT FOR MOMENT NO SERIOUS
THREAT TO REGIME IS ON HORIZON. END SUMMARY

1. COUP: THE NEW LEADERSHIP'S SEIZURE OF POWER SEEMS
COMPLETE.

THE COUP WAS WELL ORGANIZED AND CARRIED OUT COUNTRY WIDE. THE
BIG NAMES IN THE FORMER ADMINISTRATION, GENERALS GOWON AND
KATSINA HAVE ISSUED STATEMENTS OF LOYALTY TO NEW LEADERSHIP.
(LAGOS 7349). PUBLIC REACTION HAS BEEN APATHETIC -- NO
DEMONSTRATION, NO OPPOSITION -- MERELY ACCEPTANCE. WE STILL
SOMEWHAT SURPRISED BY ABSENCE NAMES BRIGADIERS HARUNA AND GODWIN
ALLY FROM NEW LEADERSHIP, BUT THEY MAY YET TURN UP. FMG ANNOUNCED
THIS AFTERNOON THAT AIRPORTS AND BORDERS WOULD BE REOPENED AUG 2,
TOMORROW, IN VIEW SATISFACTORY SITUATION IN COUNTRY. THERE ARE
NO RPT NO VISIBLE OPPOSITION GROUPS ON HORIZON NOW.

2. THUS FAR, THE COUP HAS RESULTED IN CHANGE OF FACES NOT
RPT NOT OF POLICY. BUT HIS IS YOUNGER, MORE JUNIOR RANKING
GROUP OF MEN, WHO, WHEN THEY COME TO GRIPS WITH SOME OF
COUNTRY'S MORE INTRACTABLE PROBLEMS, MAY OPT FOR MILITARY
SOLUTIONS -- FORCE, OR MOVE TOWARD MORE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
CONTROL OVER COUNTRY'S INSTITUTIONS. FLUSTRATION LIKELY TO
SET IN (UNLESS THIS GROUP EVENTUALLY BECOMES MORE INTERESTED IN
FRUITS OF OFFICE THAN GOOD ADMINISTRATION AND PROBLEM
SOLVING). TEMPERAMENTS BOTH NEW HEAD OF STATE BRIGADIER
MURTALA MOHAMMED AND HIS NUMBER TWO BRIGADIER OLESEGUN
OBASANJO COULD LEAD TO IMPETUOUS AND ILL-CONSIDERED ACTIONS.
WHETHER XENOPHOBIC POLICIES MIGHT EVOLVE CAN ONLY BE
SUBJECT CONJECTURE AT THIS POINT. THERE CERTAINLY NO RPT NO
INDICATION THUS FAR THAT NEW LEADERSHIP HAS ANY BENT TOWARD
STRIDENT ECONOMIC NATIONALISM.

3. HOW HARD NEW LEADERSHIP WILL HIT CORRUPTION ISSUE NOT
CLEAR. IT DOES NOT APPEAR AT THIS TIME THAT MEMBERS FORMER
ADMINISTRATION WILL BE INVESTIGATED OR HAVE THEIR ASSETS
QUESTIONED. THIS WOULD BE POLITICALLY DANGEROUS FOR NEW
LEADERS. AT SAME TIME, THEY MUST SOMEHOW CULTIVATE IMAGE
OF HONESTY AMONG NIGERIAN PUBLIC, WHO BY NOW ARE EXTREMELY
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PAGE 03 LAGOS 07366 011716Z

CYNICAL ON THIS POINT.

4. BIG LOSERR IN CHANGE OF FACES ARE CIVILIANS. NEW FMG IS
COMPLETELY MILITARY (IF ONE INCLUDES POLICE); NO RNT NO
CIVILIANS NAMED
TO ANY POST AS YET, ALTHOUGH COMMISSIONERSHIPS
HAVE NOT RPT NOT YET BEEN FI LED. THERE ALWAYS HAS BEEN
SOME FRICTION BETWEEN MILITARY AND CIVILIANS HERE, BUT MOVE

TOWARD MORE COMPLETELY MILITARY CONTROL AFTER LAST SEVERAL YEARS' AGITATION FOR RETURN CIVILIAN RULE COULD LEAD TO DEEPENING CLEAVAGE BETWEEN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND OTHER ELEMENTS NIGERIAN POWER STRUCTURE, E.G. TRADE UNIONS, BUSINESS LEADERS AND FORMER AND WOULD-BE POLITICIANS. OF COURSE, MOHAMMED MAY HAVE THOUGHT OF THIS AND MAY INTEND APPOINT CIVILIANS TO PANELS TO BE ESTABLISHED TO STUDY QUESTIONS OF CREATION NEW STATES AND LOCATION FEDERAL CAPITAL. TRADE UNIONISTS COULD BE NAMED, AMONG OTHERS, TO A PANEL TO LOOK AT COST OF LIVING, WAGE AND PRICE CONTROLS. IN THIS WAY, CIVILIANS COULD BE INVOLVED AND BE GIVEN PUBLICITY, BUT THEIR INVOLVEMENT WOULD BE LIMITED TO AN ADVISORY ROLE ONLY.

5. AS FOR TRNBAL AND RELIGIOUS BREAKDOWN OF 12 GOVERNORS AND 22 MEMBER SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL SO FAR APPOINTED, ONE REMAINS UNIDENTIFIED, HAUSAS, FULANIS, ETC. AND MIDDLE BELTERS HAVE 21 (TWO/THIRDS OF TOTAL, COMPARED WITH ONE-HALF OF FORMER 21 MEMBER SMC), YORUBAS 11 (ONE THIRL OF NEW GROUP, UP FROM ONE FIFTH), AND TRIBES IN OLD EASTERN REGION ONE SLOT (DOWN FROM ONE FOURTH OF FORMER SMC). THIS NOT RPT NOT TOO SURPRISING, HOWEVER, AS THERE ONLY 63 IBO OFFICERS IN ENTIRE ARMED FORCES AND FEW FROM OTHER MINORITY TRIBES IN SOUTHEAST AND RIVERS STATES. ALSO, IT IS CLEAR THAT GOVERNORS NO LONGER ARE REQUIRED BE NATIVES OF STATES TO WHICH THEY ASSIGNED. DESPITE NORTHERN AND MIDDLE BELT NUMERICAL SUPERIORITY, IT INTERESTING NOTE OUR PRELIMINARY COUNT INDICATES SLIGHTLY MORE CHRISTIANS THAN MOSLEMS AMONG NEW APPOINTEES.

6. LONG TERM STABILITY DOES NOT APPEAR TOO PROMISING, GIVEN PERSONALITY OF MOHAMMED, APPARENTLY EXCULSIVE MILITARY CAST OF NEW ADMINISTRATION, AND POSSIBILITY OF RESORT TO DRACONIC MEASURES TO DEAL WITH INFLATION, UNEMPLOYMENT, URBAN CONGESTION,
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SECRET

PAGE 04 LAGOS 07366 011716Z

PORT AND AIRPORT CONGESTION AND CHRONIC SHORTAGES OF GOODS. HOWEVER, MOHAMMED'S MID-TERM PROSPECTS MAY BE FAIRLY GOOD IF HE SUCCESSFUL IN SHOWING PROGRESS AGAINST THE MOST PRESSING PROBLEMS, CONTINUES GOWON'S CONCILIATORY POLICIES TOWARD FORMER BIAFRANS, AND CAN GIVE APPEARANCE OF PROGRESSIVE, DECISIVE LEADERSHIP.
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